

TRANSCRIPT PREPARED BY THE CLERK OF THE LEGISLATURE
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FLOOR DEBATE

February 12, 2001 LB 334

CLERK: LB 334, Mr. President, a bill introduced by Senator Jensen. (Read title.) Bill was introduced on January 8, referred to the Health and Human Services Committee, advanced to General File. I do have committee amendments, Mr. President. (AM0105, Legislative Journal page 430.)

SENATOR COORDSEN: Thank you. Senator Jensen.

SENATOR JENSEN: Thank you, Mr. President. Members of the Legislature, LB 334 requires that the Nebraska Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing to establish a telehealth system to provide access by the deaf and hard-of-hearing persons to mental health, alcoholism and drug abuse services. The bill also permits the commission to charge a reasonable fee for the use of the system. The bill also requires compliance with provisions of the Nebraska Telehealth Act, LB 559, which was passed in 1999. The commission has identified necessary components of the system. How many people will actually use the system isn't known as yet, but costs for the system include about \$18,300 a year for line charges that would, at least in part, be paid for by the usage fee charged by the commission. There's a small fiscal note, about \$9,000 a year for the biennium, to cover some initial cost as the system becomes operational. Any fees collected by the commission are credited to a separate Telehealth Systems (sic--System) Fund for expenses related to the operation and maintenance of the system. The bill also allows money in the Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Fund to be used for that purpose as needed. After the biennium, it is thought that there will be...this will be a revenue-neutral bill with no more charges from the General Fund. With that, I would ask to present then the committee amendment from the Health Committee.

SENATOR COORDSEN: Amendments to the bill, Mr. Clerk.

ASSISTANT CLERK: Mr. President, I do have committee amendments offered by the Health Committee.

SENATOR COORDSEN: Thank you, Madam Clerk. Senator Jensen, to open on the committee amendments.